

A Conservation
Ethic for
Architecture,
Urbanism, and
Historic
Preservation

THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

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SEMES



**C.1. New entrance pavilion,
Cour Napoléon, the Louvre,
Paris, by I. M. Pei & Partners,
1981–89.**

The stark juxtaposition of an abstract image realized in industrial materials—like Pei’s pyramid and its entourage—with an articulate classicism rendered in carved stone—like the surrounding wings of the Louvre—is currently a conventional approach to relating new and old in historic settings. A provocative gesture, but at what cost to the protected landmark?



**C.2. Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C., by Ernest
Flagg, 1897, and Charles
Platt, 1928, with proposed
addition by Gehry Partner-
ship, 1999–2005.**

**C.3. Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C., with pro-
posed addition by Elizabeth
Frick LaDuke, fifth-year thesis
project, School of Archi-
tecture, University of Notre
Dame, 2003.**

Juxtaposing classical landmarks with contrasting modernist additions often diminishes the setting while detaching the institution from its historic identity. Gehry’s proposed addition erupts in violent opposition to Flagg’s building, while Frick LaDuke’s counterproposal opts for continuity with the original language. The Gehry project was dropped in 2007 after a disappointing fundraising campaign, and the museum building is now being restored without an addition.





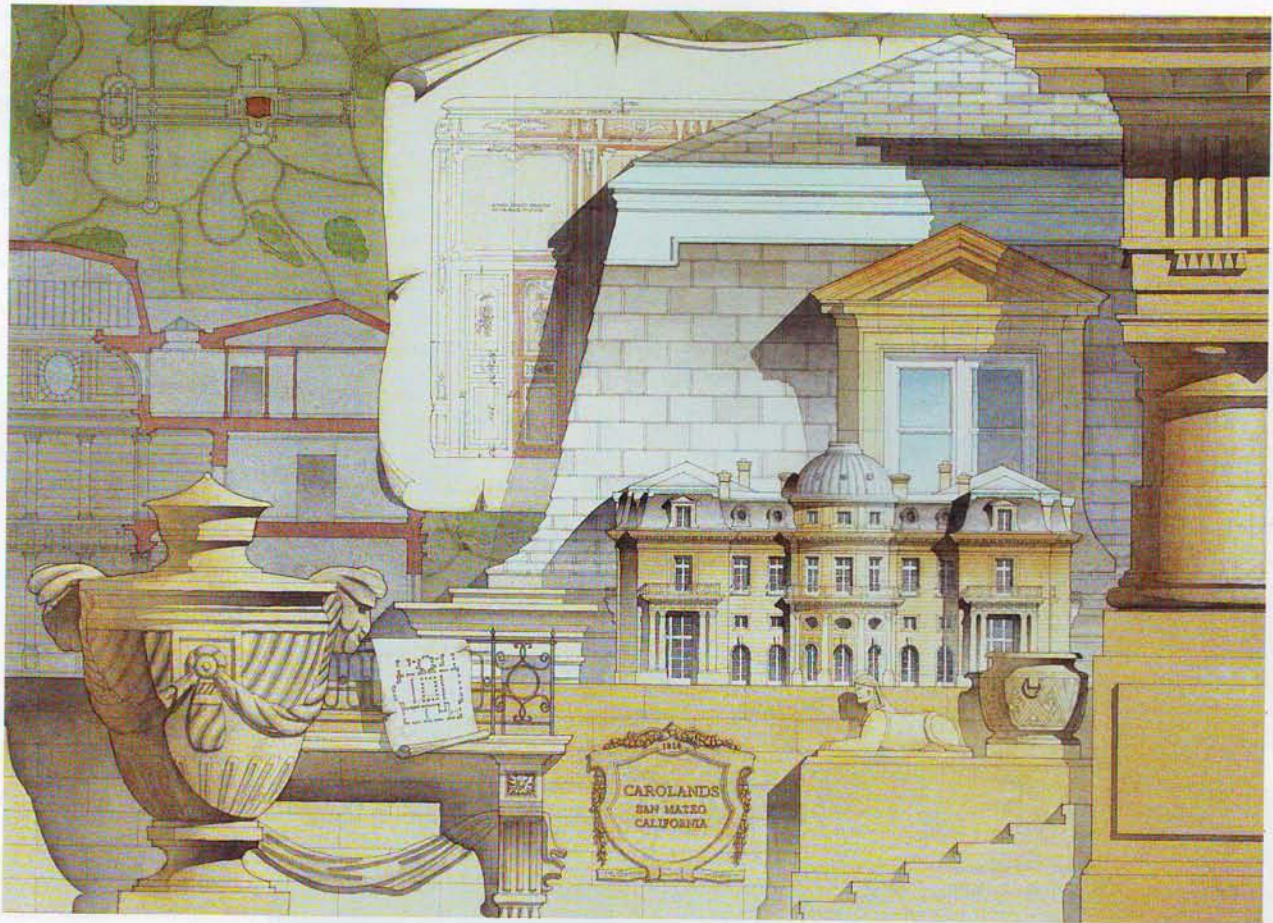
C.4. Hearst Building, New York, by Joseph Urban, 1929, with Hearst Tower by Foster & Partners, completed 2005.

Foster's glass tower and internal gutting of the landmark building were approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2001 without opposition. Despite the project's similarity to Marcel Breuer's 1968 proposal for Grand Central Terminal (see Figure 1.4), the commission found Foster's tower not an "aesthetic joke" but a "completion." Three decades of preservation successes were thus overturned. (See Chapter 1.)



C.5. Paul Cushman III International Financial Center, Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C., by John Blatteau Associates, 1989–97.

Not all contemporary architecture takes an oppositional stance toward historic contexts: The work of Blatteau and other contemporary classicists illustrates the recovery of the traditional formal languages as well as the competence to execute new works that equal or exceed the quality of traditional designs of the 1920s and 1930s. (See Chapter 1.)

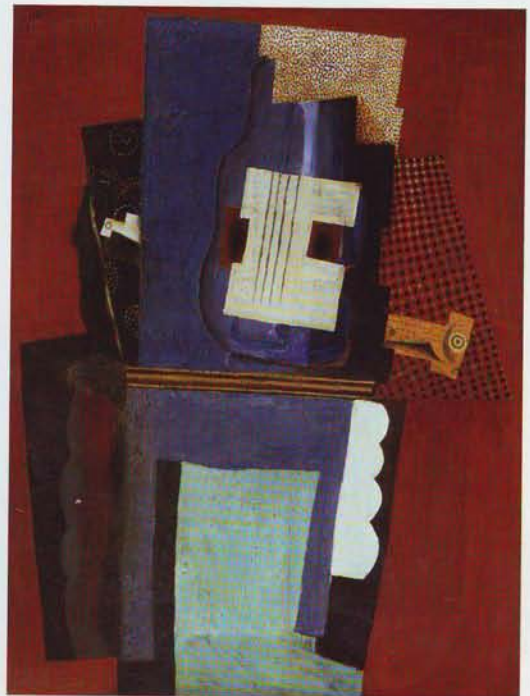


C.6. An analytique of Carolands, San Mateo, California, by Sheldon R. Kostecky, a graduate student of the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame, 2007.

The compositional premises of traditional architecture are fundamentally different from those of modernist design. A characteristic drawing type, the analytique, illustrates an architectural subject in several views at different scales, arranged so that the drawing itself reveals the compositional logic of the whole work. This example depicts an early twentieth-century house near San Francisco designed by Achille Duchene and Willis Polk. (See Chapter 2.)

C.7. Guitar and Clarinet on a Mantelpiece, oil on canvas, by Pablo Picasso, 1915.

Cubism, a formative influence on the Modern Movement in architecture, presented the viewer with a collage-like juxtaposition of indivisible but fragmentary shapes offering different views of an object simultaneously. The differences between the analytique and the cubist collage continue to distinguish traditional and modernist approaches to composition. (See Chapter 4.)





C.8. Monument and fabric: Jerusalem Church and surroundings, Bruges, Belgium.

Traditional urbanism enacts the compositional premises of classical architecture at the scale of the city. The fabric of private dwellings and interspersed public monuments reflects a parallel rapport between vernacular and monumental character. Both are products of a common building culture sharing the principles of traditional design. (See Chapter 3.)



C.9. Katrina Cottages, Cottage Square, Ocean Springs, Mississippi, Tolar LeBatard Denmark Architects, based on a design by Marianne Cusato, 2005.

Intended as a substitute for the infamous FEMA trailer, the Katrina Cottage has redefined industrialized housing. Unlike modernist competitors, these models have entered production in large numbers, are in demand outside the intended market, and can be grouped to form urban neighborhoods. (See Chapter 1.)



C.10. Infill housing and urban conservation, San Leonardo district, Bologna, by Pier Luigi Cervellati and Commune di Bologna, 1972.

Departing from the typical approach of its time, this infill housing employed local building typologies and materials palettes to replace deteriorated buildings without displacing residents or diminishing the historic character of the neighborhood. Note the continuous street arcade characteristic of historic Bologna. (See Chapter 3.)

C.11. French Ministry of Culture, Paris, former office building by Georges Vaudoyer, 1919, as remodeled by Francis Soler and Frédéric Druot, 1999, detail.

Continuity must be sought on terms favorable to the landmark buildings we wish to preserve. In this case, the metal screens with which the architects wrapped the 1919 classical building and its 1960s glass box neighbor, intending to unify them, effectively obscure the traditional building, which appears to have been vandalized by a three-dimensional form of graffiti. (See Chapter 4.)



C.12. The Grand' Place, Brussels.

Continuity of character is not dependent on style or age. The character of the Grand' Place is clear and memorable despite varied building types, uses, styles, and construction dates because these differences are harmonized by the congruence of the formal principles shared by all the buildings. (See Chapter 3.)

C.13. Arch of Titus, Rome, first century, restored by Raffaele Stern and Giuseppe Valadier, 1817–23.

At its best, modern preservation practice seeks a balance between authenticity and permanence. Using surviving Roman marble supplemented by additions in travertine to replace missing parts, the restorers of the ancient Roman arch subtly differentiated historic from new material while rendering whole the original design of the monument. (See Chapter 5.)



C.14. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, by Cass Gilbert, 1917, with addition by Venturi & Rauch, 1976.

Modernist and postmodernist architects have tended to emphasize "difference" rather than continuity between new and old buildings. Despite the ornamental pattern intended to link the addition (right) to the older building (left), the addition to the museum boldly asserts its difference. (See Chapter 4.)





C.15. Trinity Church, Boston,
by Henry Hobson
Richardson, 1872–77, with
John Hancock Building by
Cram and Ferguson, 1948,
and John Hancock Tower by
I. M. Pei & Partners, 1976.

Throughout the postwar decades, architects tried to relate new and old buildings without abandoning the element of contrast. When first built, the Hancock Tower (right) was praised as “contextual” because its glass skin “reflected” (literally) Richardson’s church (left). As glass buildings increasingly reflected only one another, the older Hancock building (rear) appeared as a more appropriate model. (See Chapter 5.)

C.16. Stoa of Attalos, Athens,
as reconstructed by the
American School of
Archeology, 1952–56.

A concern for authenticity need not preclude didactic reconstruction. Several bays of the rebuilt Stoa incorporate fragments from the original building (see lower cornice and frieze, right), subtly differentiated by the evident difference in the age of the material. Although banned by the Venice Charter as a “falsification,” such reconstruction is of inestimable value for scholarship and interpretation. (See Chapters 5 and 7.)



C.17. Lever House, New York, by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1951–52, restored 1998–2003.

Authenticity is harder to define when industrial systems and materials are involved. Less than fifty years after its completion, the curtain wall of Lever House had to be completely replaced. The new exterior is not seen as “false” because industrial materials, unlike handicraft products, are seen as replaceable—an illogical distinction. (See Chapter 7.)



C.18. Ponte Santa Trinità, Florence, by Bartolomeo Ammanati, 1567–69, reconstructed 1957.

After its demolition by the Nazis, Ammanati's bridge of elliptical arches was rebuilt, using salvaged original materials. While such reconstructions have often been condemned as “false,” in what way is the new bridge less “true” than a conspicuously different modernist design would be? (See Chapters 5 and 6.)



C.19. Baker Street buildings,
London, by Quinlan & Francis
Terry Architects, 2001–2,
detail.

An exemplary study in continuity: Gracefully joining their Georgian neighbors, the new structures demonstrate the architects' deep identification with the architectural culture of the place as well as a commitment to superb craftsmanship. (See Chapter 7.)

**C.20. New townhouse, 829
Greenwich Street, New York,**
Matthew Baird, 2007.

Modernist designers often struggle with contradictory impulses toward compatibility and contrast, and baffled authorities often take refuge in glib rationalizations. Here a new façade (center), featuring a slab of rusting steel, was judged compatible because it suggested the "gritty" character of the nearby former meat-packing district—in disregard of its historic immediate neighbors. (See Chapter 7.)



C.21. Grand Central Terminal,
New York, by Warren &
Wetmore and Reed & Stem,
1910–13, restored 1994–
98. General view of Main
Concourse.

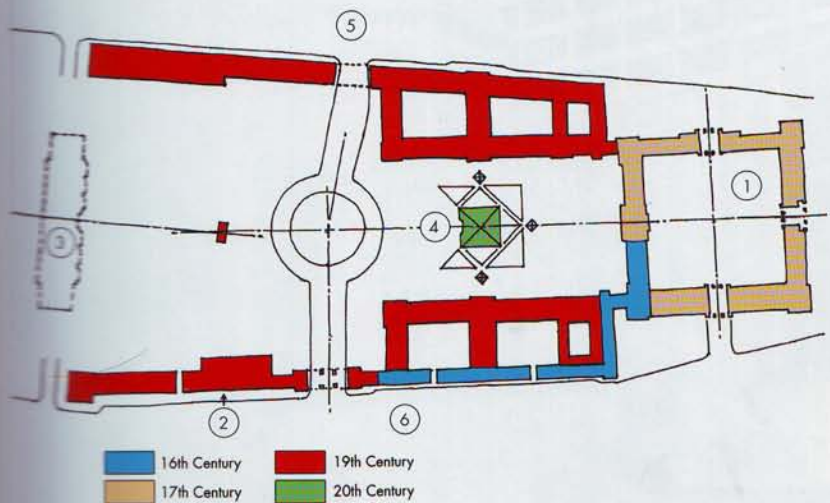
One of America's greatest public interiors, the Main Concourse was saved from destruction by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1978. Departing from preservation orthodoxy, the room was restored not to its original appearance but according to the architect's intentions, including addition of the unbuilt east staircase.





C.22. West façade on the Cour Carré, the Louvre, Paris, by Pierre Lescot, 1546–59, extended by Jacques Lemercier, 1624–43.

Literal Replication is a legitimate strategy for harmonizing new and old construction. Lescot's façade (the bays left of the center pavilion) was the first important realized design of the French Renaissance. A century later, Lemercier replicated it to the right of his new center pavilion to create a harmonious, symmetrical façade. (See Chapter 8.)



C.23. Plan of the Louvre, Paris, 1546–1989.

- 1. Cour Carré
- 2. Napoléon III wings flanking the Cour Napoléon
- 3. Site of Tuileries palace, destroyed in 1871

- 4. Pyramid entrance pavilion of I. M. Pei
- 5. Rue de Rivoli
- 6. Quai du Louvre overlooking the Seine. (See Chapters 8 and 9.)

C.24. Duomo (Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore), Florence, entry façade designed by Emilio de Fabris, 1867–87.

Invention within a style allows the completion of an older building consistent with its historic character or the original architect's unrealized intentions. The nineteenth-century façade of the Duomo successfully complements the preexisting medieval and Renaissance elements, rendering the setting whole. [See Chapter 9.]



C.25. Saint Bartholomew's Church, New York, by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1918.

Styles may be combined as long as their underlying principles are sympathetic. Goodhue's design preserves Stanford White's entrance, relocated from the congregation's previous building and set off as a separate volume, but joins it to the new church by interweaving its limestone with the new structure's warm brick. [See Chapter 9.]



C 26. Scholastic Building,
New York, by Aldo Rossi
with Gensler & Associates,
completed 1997.

Rossi's designs often suggested nostalgia for the traditional city, but his building is assembled from abstract shapes acting as mere signs for the traditional elements in the neighboring buildings. The new façade is, at best, an inoffensive placeholder. (See Chapter 10.)



C.27. Carhart Mansion,
3 East 95th Street, New
York, by Horace Trumbauer,
1913–16, with addition by
Zivkovic Connolly Associ-
ates with John Simpson &
Partners, 2002–5.

An addition in a closely related style readily supports both subtle differentiation and unambiguous compatibility. The recent addition (right) is a respectful neighbor to Trumbauer's earlier façade—by virtue of similar massing, materials, and formal language—although in a recognizably different style and with a different compositional sensibility. (See Chapter 9.)

**C.28 and C.29. Jorge M. Perez
Architecture Center,
University of Miami,** Coral
Gables, Florida, by Léon
Krier, with Merrill Pastor &
Colgan and Ferguson Glas-
gow Shuster & Soto, 2005.

The strategy of relating old and new by abstracting from composite form to simplified shapes can also operate in reverse. Krier cleverly applies this strategy to an intervention in a modernist setting, but standing the usual relation between new and old on its head. Here, the new building adds visual interest rather than deriving value parasitically from its preexisting neighbors. (See Chapter 10.)





C.30. The Harvard Club, New York, by McKim, Mead & White, 1892, with addition by Davis Brody Bond Architects, 2004.

Formal and material contrast remains the most common strategy for additions to historic settings today. Typically, the modernist addition responds to the massing of the older building and registers its major horizontal lines; but in this case the strong material and character contrast violates an otherwise harmonious streetscape. (See Chapter 11.)



C.31. The Harvard Club, New York, with rendering of counterproposal by Cameron Cameron & Taylor, 2004.

A Georgian-style alternative to the addition as built would have extended the original structure's composition, material palette, style, and character, maintaining continuity with the predominantly masonry and classical context of West 44th Street.



C.32. A historic façade in the Piazza del Duomo, Arezzo, Italy, as restored.

Historic structures may be seen by many as "documents of their time," but that does not mean each building must register in its physical appearance "the way it has come down to us in history." Uncritically revealing layers of historical development typically leads to confusion, not to mention visual dissonance. (See Chapter 12.)



C.33. Gorham Building, New York, by McKim, Mead & White, 1906, detail of ground-floor existing conditions.

The future of the past depends on our judgments among mutually exclusive aspects of that past. One of Stanford White's finest buildings remains trapped in an unsightly "mid-century modern" alteration. Will the original design be restored, or will the alteration be preserved as a "document of its time"? What distinguishes mere "history" from the "historic"? (See Chapter 12.)